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21 December 1948

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 107

SUBJECT: Achmed Soekarno, President of the Republic of Indonesia.

1. Soekarno played the major role in proclaiming the independence of the Indonesian Republic, became its first president, and formed its first cabinet. Ostensibly because of his collaboration with the Japanese, the Dutch refused to negotiate with him. He thereupon charged Sjahrir with the formation of a new cabinet, more acceptable to the Dutch. In spite of his record of collaboration, Indonesian opinion in Java holds that Soekarno remains primarily a nationalist, and regards him as the national hero. Soekarno is a leader in the political rather than the economic field. His magnetic personality and outstanding oratorical ability have won for him the support of native masses. Artistic and emotional, he is described as being very charming, approachable, and adept in personal conversation. He speaks English, Dutch and Malay.

2. Dutch distrust of Soekarno has persisted throughout three years of negotiations. The present Dutch attitude may be traced back to Soekarno's consistent opposition to Netherlands control of Indonesia. Despite Soekarno's strong stand against Communist insurgents in September and October of this year, official Dutch reports imply that he leans strongly towards Communism. Impartial foreign observers, however, including members of the UN Good Offices Committee, tend to regard Soekarno as a determined nationalist, who headed a relatively moderate government.

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